



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

September 19, 2013

Eric Olson, Chairman
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Chairman Olson:

Final action by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council on the Steller Sea Lion Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is scheduled for the October 2013 meeting. Enclosed is a copy of the draft Comment Analysis Report (CAR) for the Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures for Groundfish Fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (DEIS).

In May 2013, NMFS released the DEIS for a 60-day public comment period that ended on July 16, 2013.

This draft CAR summarizes the public comments received during the comment period and presents the agency's draft responses. The draft CAR is a tool to be used by the EIS authors to revise the EIS and respond to each statement of concern. NMFS is providing the Council the draft CAR to assist the Council in its recommendations for a preferred alternative for the final EIS. The final CAR will be included as a chapter in the final EIS, which must be completed by March 2, 2014, based on the order from the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska.

We look forward to working with you as NMFS completes the final EIS for Steller sea lion management measures.

Sincerely,

James W. Balsiger, Ph.D.
Administrator, Alaska Region

Enclosure

